



SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

October 15, 2011

RE: PROPOSED CURFEW LEGISLATION

Dear County Executive Leggett and County Council,

Thank you for inviting our community's input on the proposed curfew legislation. Our Board has considered many factors in determining whether or not the curfew legislation alone is sound policy. We have heard from the youth, business leaders, civic leaders, and other residents of Montgomery County, as well as law enforcement from the City of Takoma Park, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, and the District of Columbia. Because of the complexity of the issue, the Board is not taking a position on the proposed curfew legislation. However, there is unified concern about juvenile crime in Montgomery County.

Regardless of whether the proposed curfew law is passed, it is clear that juvenile crime is an important issue in Montgomery County. We have heard many views and concerns to consider when addressing juvenile crime, including:

- the rights and liberties of youth, ethnic minorities, and the poor,
- the effectiveness and costs of proposed crime prevention methods,
- residents' desires to live and raise families in safe and peaceful communities, and
- businesses' abilities to conduct their business, especially in downtown Silver Spring.

The best way to balance these factors is with a comprehensive plan to address juvenile crime.

We appreciate that proponents believe the proposed curfew is a tool to keep young people safe from each other and from other members of the community, and that opponents believe there are other effective solutions. We support a comprehensive approach to combat juvenile crime. Alternative approaches proposed by police and residents in community discussions include:

- additional police presence,
- improving gang intervention techniques, like the Street Outreach Network Youth Violence Prevention,
- anti-gang public service announcements,
- enhanced penalties for offenders,
- police bicycle patrols,
- partnering with management of businesses that draw youth to Silver Spring,

- use of security cameras,
- partnering with schools and youth groups,
- teen center, or a multigenerational center, and
- collaborative efforts with Prince George's County and D.C. to combat juvenile crime.

We suggest a comprehensive approach to dealing with juvenile crime. The Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board hopes conversations on combating juvenile crime not focus or end with the curfew discussion. Rather, we hope that comprehensive juvenile crime reduction strategies are used to improve community safety.

On behalf of the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board,


Kathy Stevens, Board Chair